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"THE BACONIAN HERESY."

EVERY Baconian must regard the publication of this work with feelings of unqualified satisfaction. It has been promised, or rather threatened, by the author for some years past. Now that it has issued from the Press, the Baconian cannot repress a sigh of relief, which gives place to a sincere expression of admiration for the brilliant achievement of the author. Had a conclave been convened of all the Shakespearean scholars, who witness with alarm and consternation the growing influence of the band of men and women to whom the term Baconians is applied, for the purpose of selecting a champion to represent them who should go forth and denounce the heresy to which those misguided men and women are attached, no selection for the honour could have been more wise than that of Mr. Robertson. There are, perhaps, few other writers who have covered such a variety of subjects. Here are some of the titles of his works:—"The History of Christianity," "The History of Free Thought," "Christianity and Mythology," "Pagan Christs," "The Dynamics of Religion," "The Fallacy of Saving, "The Eight Hours Question," "Buckle and his Critics," "The Saxon and the Celt," "Tennyson and Browning as Teachers," "Essays in Ethics," "Essays on Sociology,"

"Letters on Reasoning," "Chamberlain," "Montaigne and Shakespeare," "Did Shakespeare Write 'Titus Andronicus'?" "Wrecking the Empire." Mr. Robertson also wrote the history of Charles Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggles, which forms the second volume of his Life. He is undoubtedly the ablest defender of Free Trade doctrines, and his publications on this subject have been voluminous. Perhaps the finest work which has come from his pen is a volume styled "Pioneer Humanists," which contains a series of essays on Machiavelli, Bacon, Hobbes, Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Gibbon, and Mary Wollstonecraft. The gem of this series is the essay on Bacon. This is founded to a considerable extent on Spedding's "Evenings With a Reviewer," but it stands out as one of the most, if not the most, powerful defence of Bacon's life and character which has been written. The affectionate regard in which Mr. Robertson holds James Spedding will be referred to hereafter. As editor of the most convenient edition of Bacon's works, the author has displayed his intimate acquaintance with the *acknowledged* works of the great philosopher. It would not be without considerable justification that he might repeat the boast of the great man who said "I have taken all knowledge to be my province." Mr. Robertson has for many years held a seat in the imperial legislature, and is now a member of the present Government.

But it is as a controversialist that Mr. Robertson has won his greatest triumphs. Reared in a school which gave no quarter and asked no quarter, his cogent logical reasoning, his merciless sarcasm and power of denunciation, have reduced foe after foe to a state of helpless prostration. In this art he has no superior. And now this Prometheus has applied all his powers to a denunciation of the Baconians, and produced a work which, as a controversial effort, may without hesitation be characterised

as his most brilliant achievement. It is for this reason that Baconians, who hold tenaciously to the adage that "truth will prevail," must regard the publication of "The Baconian Heresy" with feelings of unqualified satisfaction.

Now the plan of the work is simple. It does not purport to be an enquiry into the truth of the contention that Francis Bacon was the author of the poems and plays which appeared under the name of William Shakespeare. It contains no impartial consideration of the evidence advanced for and against this theory. The existence of any evidence *for* is at the outset denied. *The author frankly announces that his purpose is not investigation but denunciation.* He refuses to consider the arguments of Baconians with one simple exception. That exception is made for one purpose only—that he may avail himself of the labours of Judge Willis, which are found in "The Baconian Mint." The Judge's criticisms are devoted solely to Dr. R. M. Theobald's "Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light." These labours could not be appropriated as they are—quite properly with all acknowledgments and complimentary references to the Judge—without the recognition of the existence of Dr. Theobald's work, and so it became unavoidable that he should be specially selected for denunciation. Without stint or curb, Mr. Robertson employs all his powerful resources of sarcasm and indignation to make Dr. Theobald appear unreliable, ill-informed and ridiculous. Throughout his book only once does he admit any Baconians to have, not classical knowledge, but ordinary intelligence, average education, knowledge of Elizabethan literature, or acquaintance with the works of either Shakespeare or Bacon. The possession by a Baconian of any degree of common sense he again and again specifically denies. Only once

does he suffer himself to relapse from this attitude. On page 5 he admits that Sir Edwin Durning Lawrence, like Dr. Theobald, is a learned man, which Mr. Donnelly was not. With the skill of a pastmaster in controversy, he thus seeks to discredit in the eyes of his readers those to whom he is opposed, whose opinions he does not deign to put forward even for the purpose of refutation.

But in order to induce his readers to unconsciously share his avowed contempt for Baconians, Mr. Robertson has recourse to a clever artifice which further accentuates his great controversial skill.

This theory is seriously propounded:—

"It is very doubtful whether the Baconian theory would ever have been framed had not the idolatrous Shakespeareans set up a visionary figure of the master" (page 2).

"All that one can hope to do is to arrest a minority on their path of mounting credence by confronting them with some evidence at least as valid as that on which they decided to take the Baconian turning. It was by garbled and erroneous information that they were first set going; fuller and more accurate information may turn them" (page 5).

"And the Baconian opinion—the wilder extravagances apart—is, in my opinion, an hallucination actually derivable and derived from opinions promulgated by some good Shakespearean scholars who scout the other" (page 6).

It would be impossible to conceive any theory which is more diametrically opposed to the facts. It is impossible to believe that Mr. Robertson holds this opinion except for controversial exigencies. This was not always his opinion, for in "Pioneer Humanists," after giving a number of quotations from Bacon's works, he thus commented on them:—

"The man who wrote thus, however he might hedge and temporise, and even lapse into ordinary religious unreason, assuredly made for freethought; even as the denouncer of the idols of the tribe, and the den and the market-place, though by

his constructive fantasies he might move the first inquirers of the Royal Society to trifle at large, helped in the end to banish arbitrariness from scientific thought. It is thus that genius is justified of her children; and it is in the obscure tenacity of her sway that we must look for the source of the strange dream that he who wrote the "Novum Organum" wrote also "The Winter's Tale."

Mr. Robertson cannot have entered into the fray without having read the works of some of what may be termed the leading Baconians, past and present. He is far too thorough in his methods. But it was not his object to search for the truth, but to win his case. Their valid arguments must be side-tracked. If they can be avoided the attack is rendered more simple, and the result is more secure. The hypothesis is therefore plausibly put forward that the main Baconian arguments and by inference all such arguments, are founded on the mistaken idolatry of too enthusiastic Shakespearean scholars. The mind of the reader of "The Baconian Heresy" being again unconsciously induced to adopt this hypothesis, it appears to him to follow naturally that if it can be proved that the source is contaminated, the streams which flow from it must be also, and so he is invited to say, "Agreed; proceed."

No one knows better than Mr. Robertson that the fundamental arguments of Baconians have not their origin in the idolatry of Shakespeareans. The method here employed, however unfair, is quite a common practice. Hardly an evening passes but it is adopted in the House of Commons. It is an ordinary weapon in party warfare. It was the current method in the school of controversy in which Mr. Robertson was reared. Now he has applied it to a literary discussion, and again it is impossible to withhold an expression of recognition of the skill with which it is used.

It being necessary that the men who have established

the Baconian case and their works should be kept out of the sight of the reader, a substitute has to be found to play the part of a lay figure. The perfect artist is at work. The more famous the substitute the better. Chapter II. is headed "The Position of Mark Twain" and thus commences :—

"Englishmen are wont with small justification to lay Bacon-Shakespearism at the door of 'America.' It was in fact first clearly propounded in England, and has been nourished from the start on the dicta of 'orthodox' English devotees who had either never heard of the Baconian heresy or regarded it as beneath contempt; and the avowed heretics have latterly seemed to swarm, or at least to hive, as actively in England as in the States. But since the publication of Mark Twain's 'Is Shakespeare Dead?' the cult bids fair to become predominantly an American movement, like 'Christian Science.' To a Briton, however, who knows it to be all a woeful mistake, there is no comfort in this. Error is as inevitable in its reactions as depression in trade; and the brotherhood of culture can no more than that of science recognise tribal divisions. We claim to cherish Mark Twain 'on this side' with a special regard, and it is the possession of a full share in that bias that proximately moves the present writer to lift up a systematic testimony 'on the other side,' in what Mark Twain has called, 'the Bacon-Shakespeare scuffle.' The thing has become serious since he entered the fray. Mark Twain's championship of the Baconian theory, or at least of the 'anti-Stratford' thesis, gives to the antis a dangerous advantage. He is apt to win the laughers—a thing not before to be apprehended from Baconian propaganda; and his influence in this way is even more potent since his death. And no man is likely to seek to meet him with his special weapons. The fun of 'Is Shakespeare Dead?' is nearly as good as it had needs be. But, as usual, the serious purpose or purport of its author is perfectly clear; and he is likely, as usual, to have justified or induced a strong belief by his fun where he so wished. It is accordingly justifiable to take his statement of the case as specially important, if not typical, and by controverting it, to supply an up-to-date introduction to the whole dispute. If the process involves some serious strictures on a beloved author's wilful way of handling a complex problem it cannot be helped; the master

of thirty legions in the order of humour must just take the chances in a literary war in which he was the challenger. Against one form of hostility he is secure. Against Mark Twain on no score can any man bear malice."

This is perfect! The true Briton armed with truth is to march forth against the predominantly American movement founded on error. The analogy of "Christian Science" is intended to do its work. What though there be no analogy? The implied odium has been put into the mind of the reader. The affectionate expression of regard for the great American humorist must win the sympathy of his many English admirers. "The thing has become serious since he entered the fray." Why? Because his knowledge of the literature of the period is so great and his arguments so cogent? No. Because he has thrown some new light on the subject? No. These might be considerations of consequence if truth was the object of the quest. "He is apt to win the laughers—a thing not before to be apprehended from Baconian propaganda." And it is this that causes Mr. Robertson to leave his retirement and publish a book, the greater part of which was prepared long before Mark Twain's pamphlet was dreamt of. But whether this be the cause, and not the opportunity, for its publication, all the same Baconians owe a debt of gratitude to the distinguished American for bringing about the publication of an argumentative work which neither Baconian nor Shakespearean can do other than regard with respectful admiration.

The next is a daring move. Chapter III. commences:—"Taking Mark Twain as the protagonist of the Baconian case." The Baconian has to read these words over several times before he can realise that they are printed in the book. The "half-educated" Baconian turns to his dictionary to see if it contains some meaning of the word "protagonist," of which he

knows nothing. But there remains the definite assumption that Mark Twain is adopted as the protagonist of the Baconian movement. Yet only a few pages previously Mr. Robertson associated Mark Twain with Baconians in a half-hearted, hesitating manner, for he said, "Mark Twain's championship of the Baconian theory, or at least of the 'anti-Stratford' thesis," &c. Now, to assist the exigencies of the position, he has blossomed forth into the Baconian protagonist. Let it here be stated definitely that the difference between the two shades of opinion is this—the Baconian from his knowledge of Bacon's works, literary style, methods, ideals and purposes is convinced that Francis Bacon was the author of the poems and plays, including *Titus Adronicus* and *Henry VI.*, written under the pseudonym of William Shakespeare, whilst the anti-Stratfordian is only convinced that whoever wrote them it was not the Stratford Shagspere. But the fact that Mark Twain went little if any further than the anti-Stratfordian does not hinder Mr. Robertson from testing the extent of the credulity of his readers by putting him forward as the Baconian protagonist. With but one other reference Mark Twain may be permitted to retire from the discussion. His name, without any good cause so far as it is concerned, was dragged in to prejudice the Baconian case—a clever and daring move, the purpose of which has now been communicated to the reader.

It is first necessary to examine the case advanced by Mr. Robertson against, *not* the Baconian case but against *what he chooses to substitute for it.* It will be shown hereafter that the one and the other are widely divergent.

The substituted case is thus put forward. Mark Twain's anti-Shakespearean case—not, be it observed,

the Baconian case of the Baconian protagonist—condenses into two main theses:—

1.—Shakespeare was of no account in Stratford-on-Avon in his lifetime; was utterly forgotten there from the moment of his death; and was therefore as a personality wholly incommensurate with the vast achievement of the plays.

2.—"The" plays are saturated with an exact technical knowledge of the law, which the Stratford actor cannot conceivably have possessed. On this thesis Mark Twain is willing to stake the whole question; for him it is a "crucial instance."

Other contentions arise in the course of the exposition, but these are the main fighting points.

This is definite and explicit. "The Baconian Heresy" occupies 595 pages. Of these, Chapters IV., V. and VI. are headed Argument from Legal Allusions and Phraseology and Litigation and Legalism respectively, and take up 147 pages. Chapters VII. and VIII. are headed Alleged Classical Scholarship; Argument from Classical Scholarship, and occupy 198 pages. Chapters IX. and X. are headed Coincidences of Phrase, and occupy 107 pages. Chapters I. and II. mis-state The Conditions of the Problem and introduce Mark Twain in 30 pages, and Chapters XI., XII., XIII., XIV. and XV., from their headings, purport to deal with prose styles compared; Vocabularies, Intellectual Interests, Lives and Personalities, and occupy 113 pages. It will be observed that the chapters treating of the legal arguments and those dealing with the classical scholarship arguments take up three-fourths of the book. The greater portion of these consist of quotations from the works of contemporary authors; with few exceptions the dramatists and they are chiefly confined to six or eight men. Mr. Robertson acknowledges his indebtedness to Judge

Willis and Mr. Charles Crawford, to both of whom he refers in eulogistic terms. "The Baconian Mint: Its Claims Examined" (a book with which Baconians are familiar), by the former, is described as a work of the most patient and assiduous research. The essays of the latter, which originally appeared in *Notes and Queries* and which were reprinted in his "Collectanea," Mr. Robertson believes would with a wider circulation become "a fountain of healing to many distracted enquirers." But beyond the boundaries of the industrious research of these two writers, the chapters bear evidence of Mr. Robertson's wide reading in the works of the Elizabethan dramatists, poets and sonnet writers and their immediate predecessors. These works, however, form only a small portion of that wonderful literature which was produced during the golden age of English literature. Probably he may be one of the very few scholars who know anything about the greater portion, but the volume now under consideration affords no evidence on this point. It may be truly said that it would be difficult to find any subject that he was unacquainted with, his knowledge is of so encyclopædic a character. Be this as it may, every Baconian will be grateful to Mr. Robertson for bringing together for their use such a number of quotations from certain Elizabethan writers in an admirably classified condition.

The bearing upon the Baconian case of the arguments put forward may be conveniently arranged in the following order:—

1. The legal allusions which constitute the "crucial instance" of the Baconian protagonist.
2. The alleged classical allusions in the consideration of which Mr. Robertson revels.
3. The authentic facts known of the life of the Strat-

ford Shagspere, the allusions to the name to be found between 1593 and 1709, and the origin and value of the traditions as to his life and capabilities.

4. The life and works of Bacon and their bearing on the authorship of the Shakespeare poems and plays.

5. A statement of the Baconian case, comparing it to the supposititious case put forth in piecemeal by Mr. Robertson.

6. Replies to Mr. Robertson's argument on the prose and intellectual interests of Shakespeare and Bacon.

7. Some reasons why Mr. Robertson should not refuse to consider the value of evidence afforded by cyphers, cryptograms, and the like.

8. The position in which Mr. Robertson has landed himself.

9. A plea for a scholarly investigation of Elizabethan literature as opposed to Mr. Robertson's plea for a scholarly dissection of the plays.

10. The lessons which Baconians may learn from a careful perusal of "The Baconian Heresy."

These points can only be dealt with in a very brief and insufficient manner in this article, because the writer has at his disposal only one page to answer every twenty of the larger pages in the work under consideration; but these should prove sufficient to convince every impartial reader, not only that in the main Mr. Robertson has failed in his attack, but that on every point which he has sought to establish, he has utterly broken down.

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1. Baconians are not willing to accept Mr. Robertson's dictum that Lord Campbell's treatise, "Shakespeare's Legal Accomplishments Considered," is valueless. They say that he has in no degree depreciated its value as evidence. To-day it stands exactly where it did before his book was written. This may be conclusively proved

in less than a hundredth part of the space devoted to the attack on it. The treatise was written about the time the Baconian authorship was first suggested and before it had gained any general publicity. The question as to whether Shagspere was a clerk in an attorney's office at Stratford before he is supposed to have joined the players in London had been keenly agitated for some years.

As the dramatist's works began to be critically studied, the frequent use of legal terms in metaphors, illustrations and turns of expression attracted attention. In the Prolegomena to his edition of Shakespeare (1790) Malone, who was a barrister, drew attention to this. "His knowledge of legal terms," he writes, "is not merely such as might be acquired by the casual observation of his all-comprehending mind; it has the appearance of *technical* skill; and he is so fond of displaying it on all occasions, that I suspect he was early initiated in at least the forms of the law." It was Chalmers who first made the suggestion that in his youth Shagspere might have been in an attorney's office. There had been, as Mr. Robertson definitely states (page 34), no tradition to this effect. Payne Collier invited Lord Campbell to consider the question from the point of view of an expert in law, and the treatise was the result. It is first directed to an examination of the traditions as to Shagspere's life which had come down—to suggestions as to the extent to which these were reliable. Lord Campbell refused to credit many of the traditions. The suggestions they contain relating to the circumstances of his early life did not fit in with the testimony of his works. He at last proceeded to a detailed examination of the legal allusions in twenty-three of the plays. He was not prepared to affirm that they afforded sufficient evidence to establish the attorney's clerk theory, but he asserted that if on the evidence, a jury of twelve men unanimously found a verdict they did, or did not, he did

not think the court sitting *in banco* could properly set it aside and grant a new trial. This, however, on the general question he did say :—

"Having concluded my examination of Shakespeare's judicial phrases and forensic allusions—on the retrospect I am amazed, not only by their number, but by the accuracy and propriety with which they are uniformly introduced." And again—

"To Shakespeare's law, lavishly as he propounds it, there can neither be demurrer, nor bill of exceptions, nor writ of error."

Now, as in the case of a trial of the issue, let the course which a Judge would adopt in making notes of the evidence be followed. Definite testimony by Lord Campbell to the above effect is in the Judge's notes.

What notes will he have from the 147 pages of Mr. Robertson's evidence to contradict Lord Campbell?

There will be voluminous evidence that in *certain* other plays and poems of the period the use of legal terms was prevalent. That the authors of those plays made as frequent use of legal terms as did Shakespeare. But not in one single case is evidence put forward to prove that he used them inaccurately.

It is affirmed, but without one shred of evidence in support, that Lord Campbell was not acquainted with the writings of contemporary dramatists. Mr. Robertson asserts that no one could have maintained Lord Campbell's opinion who was acquainted with their writings. But Malone had such an acquaintance and he maintained an opinion almost identical with that of Lord Campbell. It is doubtful whether Mr. Robertson's knowledge of the Elizabethan dramatists equals that of Payne Collier, and he maintained it. Mr. Robertson surely cannot claim that he alone has

read them; but his statements almost imply this. Nearly every Shakespearean scholar is opposed to him.

From pages 161 and 162 the Judge will take down on his notes from Mr. Robertson's pen these words :—

"I am not concerned to go into the question of the accuracy of Webster's or Massinger's phraseology; that is neither here nor there."

"I do not for a moment pretend that they exhibit 'deep' or 'accurate' knowledge. I leave these follies to the other side, who profess to certify a playwright's lawyership on grounds that would move a policeman to derision."

But surely accuracy and technical appropriateness were Lord Campbell's main, nay, sole points. Mr. Robertson fails to prove Lord Campbell in error on this point, and refuses to advance evidence as to the accuracy of the use of legal allusions in the quotations from contemporary dramatists. What, then, must be the decision of the Judge? *That Lord Campbell's evidence stands unrebutted and must carry with it his judgment in an order of the Court.*

It is not necessary to follow Mr. Robertson through his criticisms of the writings on the law in Shakespeare by W. T. Rushton, Richard Grant White, Castle, and Senator Davis. They exhibit a wealth of knowledge and labour hopelessly misapplied. These chapters will be read from start to finish by very few except Baconians. They gratefully welcome them. The pages are crammed with stores of munitions to replenish the armoury of the heretics. The impartial reader will, however, observe that throughout it is the ardent and subtle controversialist who is writing—one who is much too anxious and alert to lapse even temporarily into the searcher after truth, one whose main object is to make things appear to be what they are not.

The illustrations are taken from Dekker, Heywood,

Massinger, Ben Jonson, Lilly, Webster, Nashe, Greene, Chapman, and in collaboration, Rowley, also from Sir John Davies. At any rate, Ben Jonson, Chapman and Sir John Davies were closely associated with Bacon. Mr. Robertson puts, as a poser, the question, "Was Lilly a lawyer?" Can he answer it in the negative, supported by any scrap of evidence? Can he say who John Lilly was? Was there any attempt to identify him before Anthony Wood in 1691 compiled his "Athenæ Oxoniensis"? The surname was a common one. Wood discovered a John Lylie who had matriculated in 1571, and straightway married him to "Euphues." Only by conjecture can this be done. Was Heywood a lawyer? He was at any rate of Gray's Inn. Thomas Nashe, whose name appears with those of Francis Bacon and William Shakespeare on the "Northumberland Manuscript," what was he? During these all-important years 1579 to 1605—the most important years of his life—who were Bacon's associates and acquaintances? Outside the fragmentary references to his association with Burghley, Essex, and other statesmen, information as to which have come down to these times principally through documents relating to State affairs, can Mr. Robertson mention one literary man of the times, except Ben Jonson, that the brilliant young jester knew or was known to? But more of this anon.

If space permitted, there is statement after statement of Mr. Robertson's which might be questioned and disproved; but one there is which must be referred to. Again and again Mr. Robertson states and infers that Baconians were ignorant of the existence in contemporary writers of the use of legal terms. Yet he was acquainted with Mr. Harold Bayley's "The Shakespeare Symphony," and he would read on page 314: "Not only Shakespeare, but also the minor dramatists, were steeped in Jurisprudence. Their works are saturated

with allusions to supersedeas, lease parol, livery and seisin, caveats, fee simple, misprision, and so forth. The marked way in which they drag in the legal terms 'brief' and 'abstract' is a straw showing the trend of their thoughts."

And then follows *in extenso* the document from Act IV. Scene i. of Chapman's *All Fools*, referred to on page 141 of "The Baconian Heresy."

Mr. Parker Woodward and other Baconians have again and again drawn attention to the use of legal phraseology by contemporary writers.

It is difficult to refrain from again expressing admiration at Mr. Robertson's exquisite skill. He feels compelled to desribe this as a "useful compilation," which, he adds, "might serve to explode the Baconian delusion, albeit he speaks of it with surprising sympathy." Mr. Robertson knows Mr. Bayley to be an ardent Baconian. He is a member of the Council of the Bacon Society, and for some years was editor of BACONIANA. "The Shakespeare Symphony," prior to the publication of the "Baconian Heresy," was one of the few comparative works on the allusions of Shakespeare, the counterparts of which are to be found in the works of contemporaries. It covers the writings of Bacon, Marlowe, Kyd, Lyly, Peele, Greene, Heywood, Ford, Rowley, Marston, Chapman, Nashe, Lodge, Webster, Massinger, Beaumont, Fletcher, Middleton, Ben Jonson, Field, Day, Dekker, Shirley, Rowley, Drayton, Tourneur, Machin, Spenser, and the anonymous writers of the period, besides Falkland, Nabbes, Sir T. Browne, and others of the following period. It gives similitudes from the works of these writers not only on law but on religion, educational purpose, music, medicine and physiology, Elizabethan audiences, classicisms, error, wit and metaphor,

traits and idiosyncracies, and miscellaneous similitudes. An endeavour is made in it to form an estimate of the number of new words introduced into the language by Bacon, Shakespeare, and each of 24 other writers before named. How subtle is Mr. Robertson's reference to this book. It is a "useful compilation," and the author speaks of the Baconian delusion "with surprising sympathy"! In the same note "The English Language," a mere trifle by the side of Mr. Bayley's work, is referred to as "a charming little book." The student of the art of controversy should study this note with attention. He will learn from it when an author is suppressing the titles of all works which refute his contentions, and finds one which it is dangerous, in view of possible criticism, to omit some mention of, how that author may, to protect himself, casually refer to it in a note, give it reluctantly a mead of approval, coupling with that mead an expression of surprise that the author of it had sympathy with the object for which the book was written. It affords a unique example of perfection in the most delicate subtlety of the art where the borderline becomes very thin.

The present position of the Alleged Classical Scholarship of the plays is stated in the following sentences:—

"Here, again, the first instance being the legal knowledge in the plays, orthodox writers are as deep in fallacy as any of the Baconians. Long ago, Dr. Farmer proved to the satisfaction of the scholars of his generation that the author of the plays had little classical scholarship, and that the instances put forward by Upton, Lewis Theobald and others, were all reducible to English sources. The contrary thesis, however, has been zealously reviewed in recent times by two strongly anti-Baconian scholars, the late Professor Fiske and the late Professor Churton Collins, who drew upon the previous argumentation of Dr. Maguire and Professor

Baynes. Having elsewhere (Note by the author. See the authors, Montaigne and Shakespeare, 2nd edition, 1909, per index) discussed at length the classical case put by these critics and Mr. Greenwood, I will first deal with it mainly as it is put by Lord Penzance, who proceeds uncritically upon the data given him by Mr. Donnelly, and upon the sweeping assertions of several orthodox scholars."

It will be necessary directly to give a short summary of the controversy on the learning of Shakespeare, to show how thoroughly misleading is this statement of the case; but before doing so, the reader's attention must be drawn again to Mr. Robertson's skill in the choice of his position for attack.

Lord Penzance, who, it is stated, "proceeds uncritically upon the data given him by Mr. Donnelly, and upon the sweeping assertions of several 'orthodox' scholars," is selected as a starting-point in this section. Then Mr. Greenwood receives attention, but the greater part of the attack is levelled at Dr. R. M. Theobald and his cousin, the late Mr. William Theobald. It would be presumption here to offer any defence for Mr. Greenwood. That gentleman is too capable a controversialist to need any assistance, and his reply to Mr. Robertson will no doubt be forthcoming in due course. Moreover, the strength of the Baconian case lies outside his arguments, which are strictly anti-Stratfordian, and Mr. Greenwood distinctly refuses to be classed as a Baconian.

Lord Penzance held about the same position with regard to the controversy as did Mark Twain. Indeed, it is incorrect to class him as a Baconian. He read much that had been written on both sides, and from the contentions of the parties drew out what he considered to be an impartial summing-up for the guidance of the jury. He was considered a sound judge, having a remarkable grasp of legal principles, and was endowed

by nature with a remarkable facility for marshalling facts. If on a perusal of his summing-up these facts appear to support the Baconian contention, so much the worse for the orthodox view. Mr. F. A. Inderwick, K.C., in a short account of the Judge's life prefixed to the volume, says, "Whether he ever formed a definite opinion on the question who was the author of the plays comprised in the Folio of 1623 is not quite clear." Here again is evidence of skill on the part of Mr. Robertson. The work of the late Mr. William Theobald is not sufficiently known to Baconians, but it is thorough and scholarly. He had a wide knowledge of the productions of the Elizabethan dramatists. His copies of their works, copiously annotated, bear evidence of this. Moreover, he prepared a concordance of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," the manuscript of which is in the possession of the writer of this article. Dr. R. M. Theobald's life's work is held in reverence by all Baconians, however they may differ from him on unimportant points. When belief in the Bacon authorship was unpopular and adherents were few, he worked and wrote to promulgate amongst his countrymen what he knew to be the truth. The line of operations of the cousins Theobald is so extended that there must be weak points in their armour; so Mr. Robertson selects them to bear the burden of his attacks, choosing only those points which he considers as most vulnerable.

It is better perhaps in these columns not to refer to the works of living Baconian authors. But during the last few years there have issued from the Press some of the ablest and most conclusive works in support of the Baconian thesis. The point it is now desired to make is this: It must be presumed that Mr. Robertson has read widely in the literature of the subject before

launching his fulminations against it. Why, then, did he not attempt to confute the arguments contained in Edwin Reed's "Bacon *v.* Shakepeare" and "Francis Bacon our Shakespeare," in Judge Webb's "The Mystery of William Shakespeare," in W. H. Edwards' "Shaksper Not Shakespeare," in Judge Holmes' "The Authorship of Shakespeare." Why did he not take as the basis for his refutation of parallelisms Mr. Edwin Reed's "Bacon-Shakespeare Parallelisms"? No! Mr. Robertson's object was to score off his opponents, to win the laughers and his case, not to find the truth. And this for reasons which will be suggested hereafter and which redound to his credit. In confirmation of this, one more point may be stated. He began by attributing the existence of the Bacon heresy solely to hallucination actually derivable and derived from opinions promulgated by some good Shakespearean scholars who are untainted by heresy. He began, when considering the legal attainments, with Lord Campbell and W. T. Rushton. Afterwards he leaves Shakespearean scholars severely alone. In a footnote before referred to he claims that the arguments of the late Mr. Churton Collins have been answered in "Shakespeare and Montaigne," second edition. Let the reader, as the writer of this article did long ago, take in his hand "Studies in Shakespeare," and go page by page through Mr. Robertson's book and mark in Mr. Churton Collins' work the references to it, and he will find that the most powerful arguments of Mr. Churton Collins have not been touched; practically nothing has been disproved; only on some particulars and on general conclusions have different opinions been expressed. There has been so far no answer to Mr. Churton Collins either by Mr. Robertson or anyone else. Here are two exceptionally able men, each of them an expert in polemics, each possessing a phenomenal memory, each a ripe

scholar. It has been said, and probably with truth, that Mr. Churton Collins had the most wonderful memory possessed by any man since Macaulay. Who is the unscholared man to follow? He must use such discriminative abilities as he possesses. Mr. Churton Collins devoted the whole of his life to the study of classical and modern literature; no man then living had read so widely or had a mind so stored with literary lore. It is no reflection on Mr. Robertson's classical or Elizabethan scholarship to say that his pursuit of knowledge has been in so many other directions that, given equality in memory, the younger man must yield to the elder in the latter's special line. So Baconians will accept Mr. Churton Collins where it is a matter of opinion only; the more so because the facts are all on his side.

The late Dr. C. M. Ingleby in compiling his "Shakespeare's Centurie of Prayse," spent two years in research throughout English literature, from 1592 to 1693, to find every allusion, however slight it might be, to the poet Shakespeare or his works. He states that the references which he found denoted praise and, in some cases, dispraise, but not fame. No pains of research, scrutiny or study could connect the most trivial allusion to the bard or his works by any one of the great men of his day. This he regards as *tacitly* significant. The iteration of the same vapid and affected compliments, couched in conventional terms, from writers between 1592 to 1641, comparing Shakespeare's "tongue," "pen," or "vein" to silver, honey, sugar or nectar, while they ignore his greater and distinguishing qualities, is *expressly* significant. "It is plain," he adds, "for one thing, that the bard of our admiration was unknown to the men of that age." That is the testimony of the acknowledged authority on the subject.

Before passing on, reference must be made to the panegyric of Ben Jonson prefixed to the 1623 Folio. Although the transcendent qualities of the poet were not known to the men of his time, it is clear that Jonson realised them to the fullest extent, as did the author of the Sonnets. They are the two arch-idolaters. It was the custom of the time in such poetic efforts to indulge in exaggeration, but Jonson appears to have exhausted the capacities of the English language in this poem. Praise could go no further. The pet phrase of the belittlers of Shakespeare is contained in it. The lines are seldom quoted in full, but the statement is based on them that Jonson said, "Shakespeare had small Latin and less Greek." Do they bear that construction? Are they capable of any other? Here they are—

> "And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greeke,
> From thence to honour thee I would not seeke
> For names; but call forth thundr'ng Æschilus,
> Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
> Paccuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
> To life again, to hear thy Buskin tread,
> And shake a stage: or when thy sockes were on,
> Leave thee alone, for the comparison
> Of all that insolent *Greece*, or haughtie *Rome*
> Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come."

The whole poem should be read and be fresh in the mind of the reader before he seeks to arrive at the exact intention of Jonson, who, in his "Discoveries" (1640, page 334) states that Bacon is "he, who hath . . . perform'd that in our tongue, which may be compar'd, or preferr'd, either to insolent *Greece*, or haughty *Rome*."

The author of Shakespeare is in these lines heralded as beyond all praise, surpassing all poets, ancient or modern, and with prophetic instinct Jonson sees him in the future advanced in the hemisphere and made a constellation.

This position he did not reach until the nineteenth century, and he was placed there by the men who would glory in being designated the idolaters of Shakespeare. But has this full brilliance of Shakespeare's fame yet been seen? Writing in 1874 Dr. Ingleby said, "We are at length slowly rounding to a just estimate of his works; and the time seems to be at hand when men of culture will attribute to the object of their admiration a much higher range of powers than were requisite for the production of the most popular and successful dramas of the world."

Dr. Ingleby was no Baconian; he was one of the most accomplished and conscientious students of the great poet's works.

Dr. Ingleby saw the truth dimly—he saw men as trees walking. Shakespeare is still obscured by clouds and mists, but they are gradually breaking. Scholarly work by Baconians, painstaking research into the literature of the period, never before explored if the testimony of books written on the literature of the period can be relied on, a due appreciation of Bacon's life and works, the discovery of his own books crowded with annotations from his pen, are all helping to a full realization of and justification of Jonson's idolatrous metaphor. Jonson let Mr. Robertson have as a witness to the top of his bent.

Now let the reader try the effect of a cold douche from "The Baconian Heresy."

"The trouble is that, set going (*this is an error*) as they (*the Baconians*) were by the rebound of the idolatrous habit in regard to Shakespeare, they have developed a more extravagant idolatry in regard to Bacon. As the old Shakespeare worshipper (*Ben Jonson in his panegyric has never been equalled*) saw in his idol the sum of all intellectual excellence (*notwithstanding the belittlers of Shakespeare, the testimony of the culture of the world*), the

Baconian carrying credulity to new extremes proclaims a double miracle, and giving two kingdoms to one man, quadruples the folly of his predecessor," and *Jonson's prophecy is fulfilled, "I see thee to the Hemisphere Advanc'd and made a constellation there!).*

The passage commencing, "And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greeke" is not free from ambiguity —it may be contended intentional ambiguity—as are other passages in the panegyric. It is, however, capable of being construed thus: "And even if thou hadst small Latin and less Greeke, From thence to honour thee I would not seek." *

The words lend themselves as well to this reading as that which the belittlers insist upon quoting when they omit the word "though" and state that Jonson said Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greeke." And if the words permit the former construction (and they do) let the reader consider which is most in accord with the rest of the panegyric, bearing in mind this fact—that if the Bacon authorship be proved to be correct, the whole poem is the production of a wit, and is intended to make the reader use his wits to arrive at the truth.

The references to Shakespeare during the latter half of the seventeenth century usually bracket him with Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher. Sometimes one, sometimes another is preferred; but Shakespeare's supremacy is not recognized. Samuel Shepherd in "Theological Poems" (1651) says:—

> "Fletcher and Beaumont who so wrote,
> Johnson's fame was soon forgot,
> Shakespeare no glory was alow'd,
> His Sun quite shrunk beneath a cloud."

* This interpretation did not originate with Professor Conrad Mier, as stated by Mr. Robertson. It had been put forward nearly 20 years before the Professor repeated it.

It was in 1662 that Samuel Pepys saw *Midsummer Night's Dream* and described it as the most ridiculous play that ever he saw in his life; and in 1663 *Twelfth Night*, acted well, though it be but a silly play. In 1667 the *Taming of the Shrew* was a mean play; *Macbeth* one of the best plays for a stage and variety of dancing and music that ever he saw. Pepys did not appreciate Shakespeare.

It was in 1661 the traditions commenced, when the Rev. John Ward wrote in his Diary: "I have heard of y^t^ M^r.^ Shakespeare was a natural wit without art at all." In 1662 Thomas Fuller wrote that if Shakespeare were alive he would confess himself never any scholar. The first appreciative estimate of Shakespeare is found in a letter from Margaret Cavendish, Lady Marchioness of Newcastle, published in 1664. Her criticism of Shakespeare's works is excellent. The writer recognised the excellence of the women he had created. She saw what few, if any, of the "scholars" have realised—that Shakespeare was truly a natural orator. There is, however, no mention of his learning, though it appears to be implied.

Dryden first mentions Shakespeare in 1667. Dr. Samuel Johnson describes this writer as "the father of English criticism, the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merits of composition." The preface of his *Troilus and Cressida* (1679) contains his views on Shakespeare as a poet and dramatist. He was dissatisfied with Shakespeare's play, so he re-wrote it. Seeing some good in it he says: "I undertook to remove that heap of rubbish under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly buried." He belonged to the predecessors of Mr. Robertson's cult. Dryden considered that "no man ever drew so many characters or generally distinguished 'em better from one another" than did Shakespeare, "excepting only Johnson." He writes:

"The characters of Fletcher are poor and narrow in comparison with Shakespeare; I remember not one which is not borrowed from him; unless you will except that strange mixture of a man in the King and no King: so that in this part Shakespear is generally worth our imitation and to copy from Fletcher is but to Copy after him who was a Copyer." So according to Dryden Mr. Robertson's many extracts from Beaumont and Fletcher must go by the board, for the style which utilized legal reference and classical allusions was copied from Shakespeare. Allowing that Shakespeare made his characters distinct, Dryden inferred that he understood the passions. He maintained that the fury of his passion often transported Shakespeare beyond the bounds of judgment, either in coining new words or phrases or racking words which were in use into the violence of a Catachresis. He speaks of Shakespeare as "that Divine Poet," and says that if he "were stript of all the Bombast of his passions, and dress'd in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining; if the embroideries were burnt down, there would still be silver at the bottom of the melting pot." This is the first serious criticism by a scholar, in fact the first criticism of Shakespeare's works. The question of his learning is not yet broached. It is clear that Dryden, although instinctively realising that Shakespeare was great, yet failed to see the beauty of the language and expression in his poetry. But the study of Shakespeare had been started. Edward Phillips in 1671 says probably his learning was not extraordinary. Thomas Rymer's criticism in 1678 is adverse to Shakespeare, but mentions not his learning; but in 1680 Nahum Tate published "The Loyal General: a Tragedy." Accompanying it is a letter to Edward Taylor, in which he exhibits a just estimate of the poet's characteristics. He shows an acquaintance with the plays, but is puzzled by the tradition that the poet lacked learning. He writes:

"What I have already asserted concerning the necessity of learning to make a compleat poet may seem inconsistent with my Reverence for our Shakespeare,

Cujus amor semper mihi crescit in Horas.

I confess I could never get a true account of his learning. And am apt to think it more than Common Report allows him. I am sure he never touches on a Roman story, but the Persons, the Passages, the Manners, the Circumstances, the Ceremonies are all Roman."

Directly cultured men began to study the dramas, the tradition as to Shakespeare's lack of learning was questioned. No intelligent man could read the plays without becoming conscious that an egregious mistake had been made.

The gossip Aubrey wrote about the same year, but he throws no light on the subject. In 1691 Gerald Langbaine published an "An Account of the English Dramatic Poets." He esteemed his plays "beyond any that have ever been published in our language." He adds: "The truth is 'tis agreed by most that his learning was not extraordinary; and I am apt to believe that his skill in the *French* and *Italian* Tongues exceeded his knowledge in the *Roman* tongue."

Then another chapter opens with the publication of the first Life of Shakespeare, which accompanied the first octavo edition of his works in 1709 by Nicholas Rowe, and from that day to this a controversy has continued over the learning of the poet. Rowe in preparing his life was at considerable pains to gather together the existing traditions; he does not appear to have searched for the historical facts. The researches of Halliwell Phillips, however, brought to light many facts which he failed to discover. Rowe's Life contains the following account of Shakespeare's education :—

"Though he was his eldest son, his father could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free school, where, it is probable, he acquired what Latin he was master of: but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. It is without controversy that in his works we scarce find any traces of anything that looks like an imitation of the ancients. The delicacy of his taste and the natural bent of his great genius (equal if not superior to some of the best of theirs) would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much pleasure, that some of their fine images would naturally have insinuated themselves into and been mixed with their own writings; so that his not copying at least something from them, may be an argument for his never having read them. Whether his ignorance of the ancients was a disadvantage to him or no, may admit of a dispute: for though the knowledge of them might have made him more correct, yet it is not improbable but that the regularity and deference for them, which would have attended their correctness, might have restrained some of that fire, impetuosity and even beautiful extravagance which we admire in Shakespeare: and I believe we are better pleased with those thoughts, although new and uncommon, which his own imagination supplied him so abundantly with, than if he had given us the most beautiful passages out of the Greek and Latin poets, and that in the most agreeable manner that it was possible for a master of the English language to deliver them. Upon his leaving school he seems to have gone entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him."

Shakespeare scholars seem to have adopted as much or as little of Rowe's "Life" as suited their purpose. It will be observed that the greater part of the foregoing paragraph consists of the biographer's opinions rather than history or tradition. Rowe was a good classical scholar and a barrister by profession. He early forsook the law for literature, and became a dramatist of considerable renown. It is difficult to estimate the precise amount of culture which Mr. Robertson will grant the author of the poems and plays possessed, but on the

whole he appears to be in practical agreement with Rowe. It may be said with confidence that the opinions expressed by him are at variance with those held by at least ninety per cent. of the men of letters who have since then devoted themselves to a study of the Shakespeare poems and plays. The circumstances attending the revived interest in Bacon and Shakespeare of the first forty years of the eighteenth century are remarkable, and call for careful investigation by students who are interested in the Bacon controversy. Much that is curious happened, but it is not necessary to say more here or to comment on what appears to be the inaccuracy of Rowe's conclusions.

The discussion now took a vigorous course. The leaders of the two factions were the well-known critics, Charles Gildon and John Dennis. The former wrote a work, "The Complete Arte of Poetry." His view was that the poems and plays bore evidence that their author was a man of culture, of vast reading, and a classical scholar. His views were subsequently supported by Dr. Sewel. Dennis would not admit that there was any justification for this opinion, and with patriotic vehemence affirmed that "he who allows Shakespeare had learning and a familiar acquaintance with the ancients, ought to be looked upon as a detractor from the glory of Great Britain. Dennis was a man of violent temper, and between the two critics, hitherto friends, a bitter feud ensued, for which Pope in the "Dunciad" unmercifully reproaches them. It is said that he only adopted the anti-learning position because he considered Gildon had attacked him personally. But the opinions of the "detractors" appear to have prevailed. The poems and plays were there for every man to form his own opinion on the points at issue. The tradition of the poet's lack of education and consequent want of learning had been accepted without investigation. With the

exception of Rhymer, so far the only comments which are recorded are from men and one woman (Margaret Cavendish), who, on studying the works, found the evidence they contained to be at variance with the tradition. The authority of the tradition had been considered to be so binding that men expressed opinions contrary to it with diffidence; but the intelligence of the students of the works rebelled against it.

Pope was commissioned to edit an edition of Shakespeare, which was published in 1722. In spite of the brilliant preface, it is said to be his only literary failure. It is useful to quote from this preface at some length :—

By these men (the players) it was thought a praise to Shakespeare that he scarce ever *blotted a line*. This they industriously propagated, as appears from what we are told by Ben Jonson in his "Discoveries," and from the preface of Heminges and Condell to the first folio edition. But in reality (however it has prevailed) there never was a more groundless report, or to the contrary of which there were more undeniable evidences. As the comedy of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, which he entirely new writ; the *History of Henry VI.*, which was first published under the contention of York and Lancaster; and that of *Henry V.* extremely improved; that of *Hamlet* enlarged almost as much as at first, and many others. I believe the common opinion of his want of learning proceeded from no better ground. This too might be thought praise by some; and to this his errors have been as injudiciously ascribed by others. For 'tis certain were it true it would concern but a small part of them; the most are such as are not properly defects, but supersætations; and arise not from want of learning or reading, but from want of thinking or judging. . . . But, as to his *want of learning*, it may be necessary to say something more. There is certainly a vast difference between *learning* and *languages*. How far he was ignorant of the latter I cannot determine; but it is plain he had much reading at least, if they will not call it learning. Nor is it any great matter, if a man has knowledge, whether he has it from one language or another. Nothing is more evident than that he had a taste of natural philosophy, mechanicks, ancient and modern history, poetical learning and mythology. We find him very

knowing in the customs, rites and manners of antiquity. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Cæsar* not only the spirit, but the manners of the Romans are exactly drawn ; and still a nicer distinction is shown between the manners of the Romans in the time of the former and of the latter. His reading in the ancient historians is no less conspicuous in many references to particular passages ; and the speeches copy'd from Plutarch in *Coriolanus* may, I think, as well be made an instance of his learning as those copied from Cicero in "Cataline," of Ben Jonson's. The manners of other nations in general—the Egyptions, Venetians, French, etc., are drawn with equal propriety. Whatever object in nature or branch of science he either speaks or describes ; it is always with competent, if not extensive, knowledge. His descriptions are still exact ; all the metaphors appropriated, and remarkably drawn from the true nature and inherent qualities of each subject. When he treats of ethic or politic, we may constantly observe a wonderful justness of distinction, as well as extent of comprehension. No one is more a master of the poetical story, or has more frequent allusions to the various parts of it. Mr. Waller (who has been celebrated for this last particular) has not shown more learning this way than Shakespeare. We have translations from "Ovid," published in his name, among those poems which pass as his, and for some of which we have undoubted authority (being published by himself and dedicated to his noble patron, the Earl of Southampton). He appears also to have been observant in "Plautus," from whom he has taken the plot of one of his plays. He follows the Greek authors, and particularly Daves Phrygius in another (although I will not pretend to say in what language he read them). The modern Italian writers of novels he was manifestly acquainted with ; and we may conclude him to be no less conversant with the ancients of his own country, from the use he has made of Chaucer in *Troilus and Cressida*, and in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, if that play be his, as there goes a tradition it was (and indeed it has little resemblance of Fletcher and more of our author than some of those which have been received as genuine).

Lewis Theobald, who has been styled "the Porson of Shakespeare," followed. He was an accomplished classical scholar, and possessed a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and early Middle English. He produced an

edition of Shakespeare's works which, in spite of the bitter criticisms of Pope, Warburton and Johnson, has since been accepted as the settled text. Theobald was "very unwilling to allow him so poor a scholar as many have laboured to represent him." Dr. Warburton, who expresses in the preface to his edition of the works his indebtedness to Theobald, was on the side of the "Detractors."

Sir Thomas Hanmar, whose splendid edition of Shakespeare's works was published in 1744, who, by re-publishing Pope's "Preface," expresses approval of its contents, does not directly refer to the question. He adds a Glossary, and in referring to that says:—"There being many words in Shakespeare which are grown out of use and obsolete, and many borrowed from other languages which are not naturalised or known among us, a Glossary is added."

Edwards in "The Canons of Criticism," published in 1746, does not refer to the subject.

In 1746, John Upton, Prebendary of Rochester, published the first work of pure commentary styled "Critical Observations on Shakespeare." His opinion is emphatic:—

"I have often wonder'd with what kind of reasoning anyone could be so far imposed on as to imagine that Shakespeare had no learning; when it must at the same time be acknowledged that, without learning, he cannot be red with any degree of understanding or taste. At this time of day it will hardly be allowed that 'inspiration' which his brother bards claim'd, and which claim, if the pretensions were anyway answerable, was generally granted them. However, we are well assured from the histories of his times that he was early initiated into the secret company of the Muses, and though he might have small avocations, yet he soon returned again with greater eagerness to his beloved studies. Hence he was

possessed of sufficient helps, either from abroad or at home, to midwife into the world his great and beautiful conceptions, and to give them birth and being. That a contrary opinion has ever prevailed is owing partly to Ben Jonson's jealousy and partly to the pride and pertness of dunces, who, under the umbrage of such a name as Shakespeare's, would gladly shelter their own idleness and ignorance."

Upton, as did Pope, does Jonson an injustice. It has already been pointed out that the words upon which the allegation is made are capable of a rendering exactly the reverse to that which was adopted with uncritical rashness. Pope misquotes them, as they are to-day usually misquoted.

And then in 1754 came Dr. Zachary Grey's critical "Historical and Explanatory Notes on Shakespeare" in two volumes. He writes :—

"As to his ignorance in the Greek and Latin languages, though that has been more than once discussed, and much said on both sides of the question, I cannot but think from his exact imitation of many of the ancient poets and historians (of which there were no tolerable translations in his time), that his knowledge in this respect cannot reasonably be call'd in question. Nay, from the single play of *Hamlet*, which seems in many places to be an exact translation of 'Saxo-Grammaticus' (which I believe was never translated into any other language) it cannot be doubted that he had a competent skill in the Latin tongue."

In acknowledging the services of those who have assisted him in the preparation of the work, Dr. Grey mentions Dr. Tathwell thus :—

"His critical skill in the classics enabled him to point out to me several beauties in Shakespeare."

Then in 1765 was published Dr. Samuel Johnson's edition, with its celebrated preface. He thus disposes of the question :—

"There has always prevailed a tradition that Shakespeare wanted learning; that he had no regular education nor much skill in dead languages. Jonson, his friend, affirms, that 'he had small Latin and less Greek';* who besides that he had no temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakespeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed."

The reader will now be able to judge of the state of the controversy when Dr. Richard Farmer was provoked to come forward and for ever silence the "detractors from the glory of Great Britain." The pamphlet is an essay addressed to Joseph Craddock, Esq., in 1766. Farmer had projected a work, "History and Antiquities of the Town of Leicester," of which town he was a native. This was never completed. His labours were not altogether lost, for he handed the plates and some of his notes to John Nichols, the printer and antiquary, by whom they were utilised in that industrious compiler's well-known history of Leicestershire. He was of a careless, jovial, jocular disposition, but nevertheless took Orders as a clergyman. In 1775 he was appointed Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge; he served in his turn the office of Vice-Chancellor, and in 1778 was appointed principal librarian of the University. After receiving some minor ecclesiastical preferments, eventually Pitt bestowed on him a canon-residentiaryship of St. Paul's, and thenceforth he spent his time between

* Again the same inaccurate quotation that Pope gives.

London and Cambridge in book-buying and book-reading. He was an ardent collector of black-letter books, and his signature in them is often met with. But he has left no evidence of having been a deep or painstaking Shakespearean scholar. This short essay on the learning of Shakespeare *was his only book*. It is a small octavo of 50 pages with less than 150 words on a page. In it Farmer comments on odd instances which have been put forward by different Shakespearean critics; takes exception to emendations which have been made in the text; rambles in a discursive manner round the subject of his essay; points out some errors that had been made; asserts a great deal and proves very little; but a perusal of the book does not leave upon any reader who is conversant with Shakespearean literature, the impression that he could take rank in the first line of Shakespearean scholars. Some points which he endeavoured to make will be canvassed in the next chapter, and he will be proved to be unreliable. The pamphlet was republished in the editions of Shakespeare's works by Stevens, Read and Harris. It passed through several editions at the time, a second in 1767, and a third in 1789.

The reader will observe that the testimony of nearly every one of the great Shakespearean scholars up to this time was in accord. As each one devoted himself to a critical examination of the poems and plays, he found that the tradition of Shakespeare's want of learning was untenable. There was a lull in the controversy after Farmer's essay was issued, but as the study of the great dramatist's works proceeded, the inconsistencies between the facts and the tradition reasserted themselves throughout the long line of writers on Shakespeare; from thence onward the supporters of Farmer are few and far between. When "Studies in Shakespeare" from the pen of the late Professor

Churton Collins, appeared in 1905, it was considered that the question was finally disposed of without the glory of Great Britain suffering.

The revival of the subject and the laudation of Dr. Farmer by Mr. Robertson will come as a surprise to most Shakespeareans. That it should be revived as a *dernier resort* in a futile attempt to save the Stratfordian case is viewed with *satisfaction* by Baconians.

(*To be continued*).

FRANCIS BACON AND THE RECTORY OF CHELTENHAM.

AN interesting story relating to Queen Elizabeth's grant of the lease of the Rectory of Cheltenham to Francis Bacon is to be found in certain Chancery proceedings in which Bacon appeared as plaintiff, and which seem to have escaped the vigilance of Bacon's biographers. Mr. Hepworth Dixon, to whom we are indebted for the publication of the letters patent by which the grant was made, refers to the gift as an "act of princely grace," by which the Queen rewarded Bacon "most nobly for his momentous services" in agricultural reform. But, whether it was due to Bacon's characteristic carelessness in financial matters, or to his pecuniary embarrassments at the time, there is certainly clear proof that the sole benefit which Bacon derived from the gift was the sum of £666 13s. 4d.

The pleadings in the Chancery suit, which was commenced in May, 1599, are in the Record Office, and they throw some light upon a clause in the letters patent, which shows that the Queen's gift was of doubtful validity at the time of the grant, except so far as it gave to Bacon a reversionary interest.

The letters patent, which are dated the 27th February, 1598, granting a lease of the Rectory of Cheltenham to Bacon for forty years, refers to other previous grants of the same Rectory and suggest a doubt whether they are valid or void in law. If the claims of the former grantees were valid, Bacon would only be entitled to possession when their interests came to an end; and the pleadings in the suit show the alarm created at Charlton among members of the Higgs family, one of whom, named Elizabeth Badger, had been in possession of the Rectory for several years and was in possession of it at the time of the grant to Francis Bacon.

It appears from the documents at the Record Office that in 1560 the Queen had granted a lease of the Rectory by letters patent to Sir Henry Jerningham for sixty years, and that by an underlease the Rectory was held by Thomas Higgs, of Charlton, whose son bequeathed his interest in the lease to his wife Elizabeth Higgs, afterwards Mrs. Badger.*

From the time of Mrs. Badger's occupation there were rumours that her title was defective, and in 1590 the Queen granted a lease of the Rectory for twenty-one years to William Greenwell, ignoring the claims of Mrs. Badger, who made a complaint to the Lord Treasurer. The result of Mrs. Badger's suit was that a new lease for twenty-one years was granted to her brother, Robert Stephens, acting on her behalf, by letters patent in 1591; so that, when the grant was made to Bacon, Mrs. Badger was in possession of the Rectory, and there were still fourteen years of her lease to run.

But before the lease was granted to Bacon the Higgs family began to be nervous about Mrs. Badger's position; and William Higgs, another brother, who was a

* The name is sometimes spelt Badget, Bagehot, or Bagot.

merchant of London, requested his nephew, Thos. Stephens, to move the Lord Treasurer to stay the granting of the lease to Bacon. Stephens, who was a barrister and subsequently Attorney-General to Prince Henry, spoke well of Bacon, and assured his uncle that he believed he would deal fairly with his aunt. Accordingly, instead of complaining to the Lord Treasurer, the members of the Higgs' family entered into negotiations with Bacon, with a view to securing the possession of the Rectory to Mrs. Badger during the remaining fourteen years of her lease.

At the time of the grant to Bacon, in 1598, he was hard pressed for money; and it will be remembered that later on, in September of that year, having been sued by a usurer named Simpson on a bond for £300, he was seized by way of execution for the judgment debt and detained in custody at a fine house in Coleman Street, where he had been kindly recommended by his friend, Sheriff More, with whom he had been dining a few nights previously. Before this incident happened, it appears that in the month of June Bacon was particularly anxious to raise the sum of six or seven hundred pounds; and when Thos. Stephens and William Higgs interviewed him with regard to the claim of Mrs. Badger, they took the opportunity of procuring an assignment of the lease by way of mortgage. Bacon wanted 1,000 marks, and by an indenture dated the 20th July, 1598, he mortgaged the lease to William Higgs for £700, which represented 1,000 marks (£666 13s. 4d.), together with six months' interest at 10 per cent. per annum, there being a provision in the mortgage for the repayment of the money on the 6th February, 1599.

But before the day for redemption arrived William Higgs, who had borrowed the money himself, although

acting on behalf of his sister, Mrs. Badger, had another interview with Bacon in London, when he suggested a sale of the lease outright. There was some difficulty, however, in arranging the price, because Bacon considered his lease for forty years was worth double the mortgage money, while Higgs contended that the £700 was as much as the lease was worth. The negotiations for a sale caused considerable delay, and, according to Bacon's pleadings in the suit, the time for repayment of the mortgage money was extended, Higgs agreeing not to resort to extreme measures if the loans were not repaid on the 6th February, 1599.

Subsequently, however, Wm. Higgs denied this agreement and refused to re-convey the lease on repayment of the money unless Bacon would give some sort of guarantee that the possession by Mrs. Badger under her lease should not be disturbed. But Bacon firmly insisted on the *status in quo*, and further negotiations about the sale took place, with a fresh agreement, as Bacon alleges in the pleadings, that he should have three months after the Easter term for repaying the £700; while, in the meantime, Mrs. Badger should have the opportunity of considering the price, and could decide whether she would buy the lease or require her money back again.

Relying upon this agreement Bacon suspended the arrangements he was making to find the mortgage money, and was therefore taken by surprise when Wm. Higgs on the 19th May, which was a Saturday, peremptorily demanded repayment of the mortgage money on the following Monday—a demand which he knew it was impossible for Bacon to satisfy. In these circumstances there was no help for it but to apply to the court for relief, and Bacon immediately instituted a suit against William Higgs, Elizabeth Badger and Thomas Stephens, praying the Lord Keeper, Sir Thos. Egerton, to com-

mand them to appear and answer his complaint, and that a reasonable time should be allowed for repayment of the mortgage money.

The sequel to these proceedings is to be found in a letter from John Stubbs to Dr. Mansell, Principal of Jesus College, Oxford, written from Charlton Kings and dated the 25th June, 1633, which is quoted in Goding's "History of Cheltenham."

But before stating the sequel it may be convenient to recall the obligations under the letters patent granting the lease of the Rectory to Bacon, which attached to Mrs. Badger as his assignee. The rent was £75 13s. 4d., and the lessee was bound to pay the stipends of two chaplains and two deacons, as well as to provide the bread and wine and all other things necessary for the performance of divine service in the parish church at Cheltenham and the chapel at Charlton Kings. As lay rector he was also liable for the payment of the Archdeacon's procurations—a curious customary fee payable at visitations, which has recently been the subject of a civil suit in the Consistory Court at Exeter ("Law Reports" [1913], Prob., p. 21).

In 1610 there was trouble at Cheltenham about the covenants, and a formal complaint was made by the parishioners to the Bishop of Gloucester, who preached a sermon at Cheltenham denouncing Mrs. Badger for her breach of duty under the covenants in her lease to provide sufficient stipends for the ministers. Mrs. Badger's nephew, Thos. Stephens, being then Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales, and the bishop being one of the Prince's chaplains, endeavoured to persuade the bishop to deal favourably with his aunt; but the bishop insisted and sent the petition of the parishioners to the Lord Treasurer.

The Earl of Salisbury thereupon wrote a letter to Mrs. Badger, the lessee, calling her attention to the

neglect, which was causing a serious scandal in the parish. But before anything was effected the Lord Treasurer died and Dr. Parry was translated from Gloucester to Worcester, while Mrs. Badger obstinately refused to give the ministers any increase of their stipends.

The complaint of the parishioners was repeated in 1620 in a petition to Lord Chancellor Bacon, requesting that his lordship would compel his assignee to perform the covenants and to allow good stipends to the ministers, seeing that the Rectory was then worth £600 per annum. The Lord Chancellor answered that Mrs. Badger might well do so, because he had received only 1,000 marks (£666 13s. 4d.) for the term of 40 years.

Bacon's letter to Mrs. Badger, dated the 19th November, 1620, is set out in BACONIANA (1905), p. 256, and it is in almost identical terms with those of the letter from the Earl of Salisbury to Mrs. Badger, dated the 10th April, 1610.

Lord Chancellor Bacon was removed from office before Mrs. Badger answered his letter, and the parishioners presented a petition to the King to enforce the covenants of the lease and to allow sufficient stipends for the ministers. The result was a submission to arbitration, and an award was made by which the stipends were settled at £40 for Cheltenham and £40 for Charlton Kings. The settlement was effected by deed of covenant, 17th February, 1622, and confirmed by decree in Chancery, 30th June, 1625.

HAROLD HARDY.

LITERARY LEGENDS.

READING the discussions which certain organs of the Press, with unusual and, therefore, significant, liberality, have recently allowed to appear in their columns on what is called the great Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy, nothing has struck me as more indicative of the weakness in the way of argument of the anti-Baconian partakers therein than their almost entire confinement of anything of that nature to the repetition, in the form of questions, of what they evidently regard as "posers" to their opponents, although, as a matter of fact, such "posers" have been answered over and over again. And amongst these "posers" there are none, from the frequency with which they are put, to which they give more prominence, or seem to attach greater importance, than to such as these—"Why did Bacon, if he wrote the plays, conceal the fact? Why did he not put his own name to them? What reasons could he have for such concealment? Would any man in his senses voluntarily deprive himself of the fame and glory attaching to the authorship of them?" etc., etc. Having so put the matter, the already self-satisfied questioners lean back with a smile of ineffable complacency, as if, instead of thereby displaying their very imperfect knowledge of the conditions of literary publication in early times, they had settled the whole question in dispute and there was no possible answer to their inquiries.

Although, in one sense, indeed, there can be no answer to such inquiries—for no man, but himself, can give the why and wherefore of his own actions—there have been many and satisfactory answers given to them, though not, I think, the most satisfactory of all, showing that Baconians even, in some measure, have not appreciated the enormous difference of the conditions above referred to

from those at present existing. The latter have been too ready to accept the Shakespearean, or rather Shaxperean, view, or the assumption on which it is based, that Francis Bacon, in seeking concealment, or temporary concealment, for some of his writings, was doing an unusual—an extraordinary, an unheard of thing, whereas in adopting a pseudonym, and, as some say, using other personalities under which to conceal his own, he was but continuing a practice which, it is little exaggeration to say, had prevailed almost universally from what is generally called the Revival of Letters in this country almost up to his own time.

And if this be so, as I hope to be able to show it is, it provides a more conclusive answer than any other which has yet been given on the subject of Bacon's secrecy and methods of concealment, by removing all the "wonderment" there has been about it. For, going back to the time I have referred to—the "Revival," or, as it might with more correctness be called, the "Introduction" of Letters into this country—for before this time (which I take to be contemporary with the arrival of the Printing Press) there were, properly so-called, absolutely none—going back to that date, which may roughly be fixed as the middle of the fifteenth century at the earliest, and tracing from it the stream or streams of English literature which proceeded from the press or presses then introduced, down to about the period of Bacon's birth, what is it that we find? We find—just what we should have expected *not* to find under the circumstances. For in an age supposed to be anxious about and, as it were, thirsting for the revival of learning, what we should have thought would have been the firstfruits of the Press would be the great masterpieces of classical literature—Latin and Greek—supposed to have been preserved in the great monastic or other houses. But not so. What we do find is the issue of what

are really a series of fictions, lying there in MS. form, all of them having a bearing, more or less direct, on the interests of those houses—fictions issuing chiefly under the form of "Chronicles," though as purely fictional as the "Romance of the Rose," or the "Story of Cambuscan Bold." And of these fictions (taking the form of Chronicles or Histories, which form the great mass of the earliest English literature) *no one can with any certainty say who was the author.* I am aware that they figure under well-known names—Gildas and Bede and Nennius, Matthew of Paris, William of Malmesbury, Walsingham, Higden, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and all the rest of the monastic fraternity writing suppositively contemporary annals, while *not one of them, in all probability, had ever any existence in the flesh,* but were names and names only under which the monastic writers of the time of the Renaissance hid their personality in order to give, as the device no doubt did, greater verisimilitude and authority to their writings.

No very great amount of literary knowledge and acumen will be necessary to show the validity of this statement, surprising as it may seem to those who, brought up entirely on modern notions as to literary publication, are accustomed to look no further than the title-page of a book for the name of its author. For, in the first place, we know nothing whatever of any of these supposed writers but the name, except what we gather from what we are told of them in their own writings. Thus, for example, take Bede, who may be considered the greatest of them, for upon him the whole story of Church history in England is based. What do we know of Bede? *Nothing except what he himself tells us.* He was a monk, he tells us, and represents himself as writing in the eighth century, and every other ecclesiastical historian following him has told us the same. But no scholar outside his Order knew anything about

him till the sixteenth century. His so-called works were not known till the reign of Henry VIII., not printed till 1643. This, in itself, is sufficient to show that Bede, the Venerable (as he is generally called, because of his representing the earliest of ecclesiastical historians), was no more writing in the eighth century than "Old Fuller," one of the latest of them, was when he threw doubts upon the actuality of his "venerable" predecessor. But, if this is not enough, the very language in which Bede wrote proclaims the fact that he was not an eighth-century man, for his language, fairly good Latin, was the Latin of the Renaissance. In the eighth century Latin was probably a language entirely unknown in this country. And, as if all this were not enough to exclude Bede from any list of genuine writers, we are told that amongst his works are Commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, works which in his time did not exist.*

And what I have said of Bede applies in the main to all the other so-called historians and chroniclers of what are called the Middle Ages. They were all of them but lay figures, or masks for the more or less learned monastic writers (chiefly Benedictines) of the Renaissance period. ¶If this were not so, where, I would ask, are the originals of the works which they wrote and which were subsequently printed? Were they treated as printer's copy and destroyed when done with? It might have been so from the absence of copies of them now in existence. But it was the boast of the monasteries up to the last that they had in their keeping these precious works, and others of vast antiquity, showing how true culture had begun in them and still continued. And so the monasteries and university colleges were supposed to be full of

* The jesting monk who wrote under the name of Rabelais, in ridicule of the works fathered upon Bede, makes him the author of a treatise, "De Optimitate Triparum!"

them, their owners regarding them as their most cherished treasures. And yet, when John Leland was sent round by King Henry VIII. in 1533 to seek for and report on these treasures, and he set forth on his journey and, armed with the royal warrant, examined every likely place—every hole and corner in the kingdom, as he himself declares—when he thus sought for them, what does he say that he found? Why, *nothing*, practically *nothing*—nothing at least to justify popular belief (which was also his own at starting) in the wealth of literary matter awaiting him. He came upon no Bedes, no Gildases, no Nenniuses but one, and that he found a forgery! "Was there ever such a fool of a book," he exclaimed on laying it down, "an affair of splendid lies, old wives' fables and prodigious barbarism?" Yet so infatuated was he (Leland)—this honest reporter—with the beliefs of the time that he still believed that, though the copy might be a make-up, the real Nennius must still be "somewhere"! It would be amusing to follow this honest, but credulous antiquary on his rounds, but I have no space or time for the journey. Readers must search for themselves. I mention this as an incident which was repeating itself nearly everywhere and showing that, though the searcher never wavered in his belief that he should find something, he (and this is the important fact) *never did*. Only one other anecdote will I mention in illustration of this. Coming to Oxford—Oxford, the home of learning—Leland had a great desire to see the works of Robert Greathead and sought permission to view the Franciscan Library there. The monks, the keepers—"the asses," as Leland calls them—demurred, protesting and "braying out" that "no mortal was allowed to visit those sacred recesses and view the mysteries within." But when Leland insisted, showing them the royal warrant, and was admitted, "What," he cried, "did I find? Dust, cobwebs, moths, worms,

filth! When I asked for their treasures, they showed me coals! As for books—why, I would not buy them for three halfpence!"

But, turning from monastic or ecclesiastical to lay writers treating of secular subjects, and commonly spoken of as Humanists, we find, I think, the same secrecy prevailing in the matter of literary publication as in the former case, though from a different motive. The motive of the monastic writer, who wrote in the interests of his Order and under the protection which that Order afforded him, was, by placing his utterances in the mouths of venerable personalities, supposed to be treating of contemporary events, to give to his writings greater authority, the motive for the Humanist was simply safety and self-protection. It may truly be said that a man in the days I am speaking of, writing, as men do now, on his own responsibility, along with the pen took his life in his hand. Whatever his subject, however innocent, what with the political authorities on the one hand, on the watch for treason, and the ecclesiastical on the other, on the scent for heresy, the unhappy "author," writing under his own name, would never be free from the danger of the halter or axe on the one side, or the stake on the other. But, under the disguise either of a pseudonym or of the name of a man of straw, or, preferably, of a man long dead, he was comparatively safe. Hence his resort to some such disguises. True, he lost, or, at least, risked all chance of either gain or glory. But the secular writers of whom I speak, and whose writings have come down to us under feigned names, could not have been animated by the thought either of gain or glory, or they would have sought those rewards in other fields—in commerce, the law, about the Court, or on the battle-fields. They were those who, having tasted of the sweets of the new learning which, with the printing-press, was slowly

making its way into this country—were pursuing it for its own sake, and, like Bacon in somewhat later times, took up their pens purely for the "advancement" of knowledge and the benefit of mankind.

Naturally this brought them into conflict with monastic tradition and its literature, political, ethical and ecclesiastical, necessitating methods of concealment such as I have above hinted at in the way of publication, and an enforced self-effacement on the part of authors, evidently inconceivable by many in these days when, as the poet says with pride (though also with some exaggeration),

"A may man speak the thing he will."

And of these "methods of concealment," the one adopted in the case of Humanist writers was, as I have already said, the one also most favoured by their monastic or ecclesiastical rivals, though from a different motive, that, namely, of fathering their writings upon some ideal name of the past who could not be brought to account for any heretical or treasonable, or otherwise objectionable matter contained therein—a pious and generally successful fraud in the uncritical days when it was first adopted, and still apparently unsuspected or undetected in these.

And, as the best and most prominent illustration of what I mean by this, I will take the case of Geoffrey Chaucer, who, though, no doubt, as a mercer and citizen of London, Master of the Customs, and man of affairs in the late fourteenth century, had a personal existence, but who, as a poet, philosopher, dialectician, rhetor, mathematician—for as all these he is represented—in short a universal genius—is as much a myth and a legend as the great idol of the monastic writers, the "Venerable Bede"—his title of "Dan," or "Father," being not improbably suggested by the attribute bestowed upon the great monastic Classic.

For what reason this famous individuality was chosen by the coterie of wits and scholars in the beginning of the sixteenth century (whose home or habitat was, as I am personally inclined to think, like Bacon's, the Inns of Court)* it is impossible, of course, to say; but it is certain that in his literary character Chaucer was never known till then. John Leland, writing about the year 1540, is the first to tell us anything about him, but what he says is derived from rumour only. He tells us, indeed, that a collection of the great author's writings was made by Caxton, but he does not seem to have ever seen it. The editions he names are those of Thynne and Bertholet, published just before his time of writing, and from these he gives us a list of Chaucer's works, amongst which, he tells us, would have been included "Piers Ploughman," but for its reflections on the morals of the monks, a remark which indirectly points to William Langland, his supposed contemporary, as also a cloak-name. But that Chaucer, in the fourteenth century, could have composed such works as the "Canterbury Tales," full of learning only known, or beginning to be known, in the early sixteenth, is a mystery at least as great as that the Illiterate of Stratford should have been responsible for the scholarship—the profound and accomplished scholarship—displayed in the Shakespeare Plays, etc. To give but one instance in support of this, what would be the use of Chaucer telling his readers, at a time when classical literature had not crossed the Alps, to read not only

* The Inns of Court were the cradle of the new learning and civility—the great humanist university—at a time when the Oxford and Cambridge colleges were comparatively boys' schools. They were full of "young Bacons," thirsting for true knowledge—that is, the revival of the old and its "advancement." Ben Jonson (like Fortescue) describes them in his time as the "noblest nurseries of humanity and liberty in the kingdom."

"David in his Psalms" but Seneca, at a time when it is at least doubtful whether a copy of either of the writings referred to was to be found in this country?

I could, indeed, point to many more such anachronisms, as well as adduce other arguments, tending to show that these famous "Tales" could not have been written at the time usually assigned to them, and that, therefore, the Chaucer of the fourteenth century—the historical Chaucer—could not have been the author of them, but it would require more space than I am sure you could afford. As to who was the author, or, rather, who were the authors of these remarkable "Tales" (for I believe there was more than one), that is another story, into which I will not here enter, my object being to show what I believe is a fact—that the whole of what we are pleased to call "early" English literature, by whomsoever written, is not, and cannot be, older than the time loosely described as the "Revival of Letters," that is to say the beginning of the sixteenth century. Before that time there was practically no literature of any kind in this country. And not only no "literature," in the proper sense of the word, but really no "records" —nothing reliable on which to base what we now call "history." We have the authority of no less a person than John Strype for saying that in 1529, the year of Wolsey's fall, there were at the Rolls Office no Records more ancient than the reign of Henry VII. And this fact, so far as I can find, remains true to the present day. By "records" I mean, of course, as Strype did, genuine "records." Of records of a sort—falsified or fabricated—there are many, as Macaulay admits and deplores—"every source of information," as he says, "relating to our early history being poisoned by party spirit."

On the whole, therefore, it may, I think, with truth be said that before the time of Henry VII. (1485—the very

end of the fifteenth century) we know nothing—absolutely nothing *for certain*—of the history of our country, either political, ecclesiastical, or literary. The whole of it, back from that time, is simply a legend or series of legends, as mythical as those in which the early history of Rome or of Greece has come down to us. I have specially referred to the "Bede Legend" as illustrating the methods of Monastic, and the "Chaucer Legend" of Humanist, literary production and publication. But there are, of course, many others, as the great "Wiclif Myth," which is made to turn on disputes about Bible theology at a time when the Bible, as we know it, was not in existence, and to revolve round the name of an entirely fictitious personality, set up by the literary monks and friars as a kind of Aunt Sally in the garb of a poor secular priest, against whom to launch their polemical arrows.* Also I might refer to what may be called the "Great Becket Legend," and to the traditional glories of the Court of the Second Henry, when, in a barbaric age—an age so barren of learning that the possession of two out of our three famous Board School "R's" was sufficient to gain for that monarch the title of

* John Wiclif (Johannes Vicoclivus = Wicked-lifed John) is said to have died in 1384, and to have left behind him, besides a translation of the Bible, many books so heretical as to earn for him by the punning monks the above title, or, as it is rendered in the "Granary" of the orthodox Wheaty-John (another monkish pun) of Wheathampstead, "a man of all men most wicked." Yet John Boston, himself a monk, compiling a catalogue of writers some hundred years later, makes no mention of the "Wicked John," or his works. Neither (still more strangely) does John Leland, making another catalogue in 1533, which seems to show that the "first English Reformer" was not so much a fourteenth century man as a sixteenth, and *then invented for literary purposes only*. Round him, far back in the former century, were made to revolve (as I have said) the "questions" agitating the sixteenth—the Scriptures in English, the Mass, etc., etc.

"Beauclerc"—an age when, perhaps, the only Latin known or heard was that of the Missal and Breviary—Gerald of Cambria and Walter Mapes of the Welsh Marches are represented as writing Latin verses, and quoting familiarly Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and other classical writers, long forgotten, and not as yet "revived" even in Italy!

Who can doubt, indeed, that the works of these supposed early scholars, busied as they are with the Church and Monastic questions of the time of Henry VIII., and written in the Latin of the Renaissance, were from the pens of writers of the latter date, though *dated back* to the thirteenth century?

And so, I contend, the habit of concealment (for doubtless good reasons) continued down even to the day when Francis Bacon (doubtless also for good and sufficient reasons) assumed his now immortal pen-name of Shake-Speare, or Shakespeare.

Why, indeed, he adopted this particular name as a pseudonym or pen-name, may-be, indeed is, a matter for doubt and controversy. But that does not concern me now. All I wish to point out here is that Francis Bacon, in assuming such a name as a cover, was doing nothing extraordinary—nothing, indeed, to account for the surprise of those (and they seem to be in the majority) who, judging everything by modern standards, seem to lay such stress upon what I may call the title-page argument; for, indeed, it was only in later days—in *these* days one might almost say—that this title-page argument has been regarded as incontrovertible evidence of authorship. "John Smith" puts his name now on the title-page of a book and all the world now accepts—and accepts reasonably—"John Smith" as its author; but in the 16th century that was not so. On the contrary, there were few books issuing from the press in that time of which it could be said, or can be

said, with certainty, that the name upon the title-page was the name of the real author. Take, for example, the series known as the English Chronicles, as opposed to the Monastic or Latin Chronicles; they appear under the names of Fabian, Hall, Grafton, Holinshed, and others of whose personalities we know nothing, or next to nothing, though, as their compilations were for the most part derived from the monastic chroniclers, there seemed no reason for concealing their identities. We cannot, however, be sure of them. Fabian, for instance, though called a printer, must evidently have been a clergyman. It would seem as if, in these cases, it was only thought necessary that some name might be fixed to the title-page in order to distinguish one of these Chronicles from the other, for they all go over somewhat the same ground.

But as a more prominent instance of the uncertainty, to say the least, of the title-page of a book being convincing evidence of its authorship, let me refer to one other great name responsible for a whole library of literature of various kinds. I refer to the name of Sir Thomas More, one-time Chancellor of England. To him is assigned, as everyone knows, the immortal work entitled "Utopia." But who can rise from the perusal of that book, after reading such a passage as the following, without having some doubts as to its coming from the pen of one who, though by tradition the gentlest and "mildest-mannered man" of his age, was practically the bitterest persecutor of anyone in the shape of a Reformer in his day, and who lost the favour of the King—even such a King as Henry VIII.—by his determined opposition to the relaxation of the Heresy Laws? In that ideal realm (Utopia) writes the author of the book:—

"They do not drive any to dissemble their thoughts by threatenings, so that men are not tempted to lie or disguise

their opinions, which, being a sort of fraud, is abhorred by Utopians."

Can anyone believe that this liberal sentiment—a sentiment which might be considered quite "advanced" even in these days—emanated from the mind and pen of one who, however mild and gentle in his private life, did not shrink on principle, and in practice, in the cause of what he considered true religion, to resort to the rack and the faggot?

On the other hand, whilst not shrinking from the sternest measures in case of what he thought "need," being notorious for mildness of manners and gentleness of speech, how can we, without many searchings of heart, attribute to him also the violence of language and the virulence of abuse contained in the tracts ascribed to him in refutation of Tyndale?

Such considerations as these speak far louder than title-pages in deciding upon the authorship of a book, and I cannot help thinking one-half at least of what are commonly called "More's Works" were fathered upon him simply because his was one of the conspicuous and popular names of the time. And what I here say of More is true also of other great names—used as covering names by writers whose real names we do not know, and probably never shall know. And, of such names, I will only mention three—to wit, Raleigh, Sidney and Spenser; for how are we—to use the well-known and searching language of Ralph Waldo Emerson—to "marry the lives" of these men to the works attached to their various names, or at least some of them? The task, it seems to me, is almost as difficult, though in a different way, as that of "marrying the life of the man of Stratford with the verse" of "Shakespeare."

I could continue the discussion of this subject almost *ad infinitum*, but I think I have said enough to show (1) that the concealment on Bacon's part, which our

"Shakespearean" critics make so much of, was no cause of wonderment, and (2) that the "Shakespeare" myth or legend is but one of many which require the same searching investigation which that is receiving, and that is my only object in this article.

JOHN HUTCHINSON.

FRANCIS BACON'S WILL.

IT may have been a practice at that time to deliver to administrators *cum testamento annexo* the original Will of a testator, where, as in Bacon's case, the executors renounced probate. The grant of administration to his estate was made to Sir Robert Rich and Thomas Meawtys on 18th July, 1627, and on 30th July, 1627, the original Will was delivered out of Doctors Commons. Mr. Spedding seems to have been surprised at this. Whether taken on the grant or not, it is strange, in view of the great care taken of many documents belonging to Bacon, that the Will was not preserved, and that we only know of its contents by the official copy.

Tenison, in BACONIANA, 1679, gives a transcript out of what he calls "the Lord Bacon's last Will relating especially to his writings." What he transcribes is, for the most part, *not in Bacon's last Will at all.* He probably quoted from a Will later in date than the Will of 10th April, 1621, but earlier than the Will in respect of which Letters of Administration were granted. In this intermediate Will (which again is unforthcoming) Francis directed his servant Percy to perform certain duties concerning his manuscript compositions which, in the Will of 1621, he had directed his servant Harris to do. At the date of the latest Will, Percy was no longer his servant.

This appears by the terms of the document itself and of a letter from Bacon in the following month.

One cannot help asking what has become of the Will which Tenison quoted from in 1679?

While, in the earlier Wills, testator referred to his unpublished manuscripts and desired certain persons to advise or decide upon what should be published and what suppressed, the *last* Will contains no reference to manuscripts and gives no directions. There is only a request to his executors and Mr. Bosville to seal up his papers preliminary to examination.

Doubtless Francis by that date had already passed his manuscripts into the hands of Rawley, or other friends, with any necessary directions. Had this not have been done, they would have had to be sold for the benefit of creditors. It looks as if he wanted his brother-in-law, Sir John Constable, and his literary friend, Bosville, to see that no papers had escaped destruction which might reveal facts inconsistent with his desire to keep secrecy as to his vizarded publications during his long-time experiment of teaching by the means of these publications.

Bosville was the man of letters, better known as Sir William Boswell, formerly engaged at the Foreign Office, but then Ambassador at the Hague.

While there (until his death in 1649) Boswell was actively engaged looking after the interests of the English Protestant Churches in the Netherlands. He was also the intermediary by whom certain of Bacon's manuscripts were entrusted to the brothers Gruter for printing and publication abroad.

Tenison and his intimates may have thought it prudent (when at Rawley's death in 1667 they received charge of Bacon's manuscripts) to account for their possession of them by the suggestion which the transcribed Will afforded.

Bacon's bequest of his books to Constable must, of course, have failed in consequence of the insolvency of his estate. His extensive library was probably sold in small lots privately, which would account for so many of the books eventually drifting into the hands of dealers.

From its construction and detail, Bacon seems to have expected that his Will would one day be eagerly scanned for the information as to his private affairs which he took pains to place there.

He lets us know, for instances, that his chambers at Gray's Inn were four stories in height; that James I. had given him a pension of £1,200 per annum; and that he was upon terms of intimacy with the Earl of Dorset (whose relative five years earlier erected the "Spenser" tomb in Westminster Abbey).

In his inimitable and quiet way he indicated that his marital relations had not been all they should have been; that he had much more than carried out the obligations of his marriage settlement; and that his wife's private fortune was not more than £200 a year. This disposed in advance of any suggestion that he married for money and not for loving companionship.

The weak places in his matrimonial experiences are indicated by the statement that his wife had at one time "lived at her own charge" (a covert way of intimating that at one period they had lived apart), and by the revocation for "just and grave causes" all gifts to his wife. After his death the lady married her gentleman usher.

He reiterates in his Will his regard of life as but a pilgrimage, an expression he had, as a young man, used writing as Lyly, at middle age writing as Shakespeare, and in old age in attributed poem and prayer.

He affirms that death should not be unwelcomed—"the day of death is better than the day of birth."

ANOTHER BACON SIGNATURE.

IN BACONIANA of July, 1912, it was noted that in the fifteenth stanza of *The Rape of Lucrece*—in which "Shakespeare" makes the extraordinary comparison of the lustful look in Tarquin's eyes with "the subtle shining secrecies" written in the margins of books—the marginal letters are B, C, N, W, Sh, N, M, and that Sh appears on line 103, which number by Bacon's system represents the numerical value of "Shakespeare."

In *The Tempest* (Act I. scene ii.) there is a similar instance, which appears to have gone unnoticed. It is where Prospero decides that the hour has come to tell Miranda what she is, and how they came upon the island:—

. . . . . Sit down;
39. For thou must now know further.
Mira.— You have often
Begun to tell me what I am; but stopped
And left me to a bootless inquisition.
43. Concluding, *Stay, not yet.*
Prospero.— The hour's now come;
The very minute bids thee ope thine ear;
Obey and be attentive.

Here we have F. Bacon very clearly written, but in such a way that it is scarcely likely to be noticed by the reader. The example begins on line 39 of the scene, which number is the numerical value for F. Bacon.

The Tempest is autobiographical, and both Stratfordians and Baconians are agreed that "Shakespeare" speaks through the mouth of Prospero. Is it merely a coincidence that the moment Prospero begins his history we should find this curious illustration? These jests are worthy of "the most prodigious wit who ever lived"; but to those who would rather not look further, all revelations of Bacon's marvellous ingenuity will remain "coincidences." R. L. EAGLE.

ADAM CUPID.

In *Romeo and Juliet* (II. i. 11) we find the following lines:—

> "Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,
> One nick-name for her purblind son and heir,
> Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim,
> When King Cophetua lov'd the beggar-maid."

Adam has puzzled the critics. *Upton* considers the allusion is to "a most notable archer, named Adam Bell."

Steevens thinks the same archer is alluded to.

Knight thinks Abraham is the right word—the cheat, the "Abraham Man," of the old stories.

Hunter thinks Adam is a nickname for Cupid, but he gives no reason for his opinion.

Dyke thinks Adam is a corruption for Abron, *i.e.*, Auburn, and gives some not very convincing reasons for his opinion.

Grant White agrees with Dyce, and quotes some passages in support of his belief.

Halliwell thinks that Upton's alteration to Auburn is forced.

Knightly comes nearest to the true sense: "Shakespeare may have known that in classic mythology Love was the first of beings."

All these show how conjectural and unsatisfactory the interpretation of Shakespeare is when Bacon is not consulted. In his Works, V. 461, he says: "Love is the most ancient of all the gods, and therefore of all things else, except chaos, which they hold to be co-eval with him. He is without any parent of his own." And in "De Principius" he writes: "Various attributes have been assigned to Cupid, as that he is always an infant—blind, naked, winged, and an archer."

Shakespeare frequently alludes to these attributes, thus :—

> "Love hath been ten thousand years a child."
> (*L. L. Lost*, V. ii. 11).
>
> "Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
> And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind."
> (*M. N. D.*, I. i. 234).
>
> "Hit with Cupid's archery."
> (*M. N. D.*, III. ii. 103).
>
> "Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste ;
> Wings and no eyes figure unheeding haste ;
> And therefore is love said to be a child,
> Because in judgment he's so oft beguiled."
> (*M. N. D.*, I. i. 236).

In Bacon alone can we find in one passage the true interpretation of all these passages ; and yet the Baconian hypothesis is scouted by most Shakespearean critics as idiotic and unreasonable. In truth no Shakespeare critic is fully equipped unless he has made as complete a study of Bacon as he has of Shakespeare.

R. M. Theobald.

REVIEW.

Tudor Problems, being Essays on the Historical and Literary Claims, ciphered and otherwise, indicated by Francis Bacon, William Rawley, Sir William Dugdale, and others, in certain printed books during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By Parker Woodward. 334 pages. 8vo. Royal. London : Gay & Hancock, Ltd. 15/- net.

Under the title of "Tudor Problems" Mr. Parker Woodward published, in 1909, a volume of essays on the Historical and Literary claims alleged to be ciphered in certain Elizabethan and Jacobean books by means of the cipher, "*Omnia per Omnia*," invented by Bacon in 1578. These essays have been extensively revised and augmented, and in the volume now under consideration are so presented together, with a number of additional essays which appear for the first time.

The sheet-anchor of the author is the biliteral cipher story as revealed by Mrs. Gallup. He writes to his fellow-Baconians in

italics :—"Without the cipher story you are pottering in the dark, and while able to assemble parts of the Mosaic, you will not succeed in forming its pattern." Starting with the statement contained therein that Francis was the son of Queen Elizabeth by Lord Robert Dudley, the vizard which first enshrouded him at his baptism, and which seems to be as tightly fastened on him to-day, was the surname of "Bacon." Other vizards which he adopted were :—Gosson, Lyly, Watson, Peele, Greene, Marlowe, Spenser, Kyd, Nash, Whitney, Webbe, Dorrell, Bright, Burton, and Shakespeare. An essay is devoted to the consideration of the works appearing under each of these names, and of what is known of the person who bore it. Mr. Parker also devotes chapters to Queen Elizabeth, Robert Earl of Essex, Filium Labyrinthi, The Allegory, Educational, The Play Folio, Eternizing, The Maze, Sidney, Plays, Re-entombed, The Love Test, Seven Psalms, Cipher History, Sonnets, among other subjects. Mr. Parker Woodward has covered a very wide range of literature. He has ransacked the works of the period, and brought together a mass of information which appears to support his contention that the biliteral cipher story is authentic and reliable. To those who have already given their adhesion to that story this book must be conclusive, and place the matter beyond the region of doubt. On the title-page is a quotation from Pericles, "Truth can never be confirmed enough," and this axiom has been ever present with the writer in his labours. To those who have not accepted the cipher story the work is of even greater value. Mr. Parker Woodward has made out a strong case by the production of historical and literary evidence.

Every page in "Tudor Problems" is alive with interest and full of suggestions. The chapter on "The Play Folio" is an able explanation of that which is generally considered the most formidable stumbling-block in the way of the Baconian theory. It is possible that Mr. Woodward has too readily accepted the tradition that Shagspere was known to his contemporaries as an actor or actor-author. There is no evidence in support of this tradition except such as would be under the control of Bacon, assuming that he had adopted the name of *William Shakespeare* as a vizard. The theory broached by Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence is the most reasonable explanation—that Shagspere was discovered after the pseudonym had been used on *Venus and Adonis*, packed off to Stratford, set up there as a gentleman, and kept out of sight as far as possible. "Eternizing" is another valuable contribution to the study of the literature of the period. The table given on pages 254, 255 of the dedicatees of the books might, with advantage, be enlarged to include some hundreds of books published between 1576 and 1620 which bear unmistakable evidence of having had their origin in the same workshop, although not from the same pen.

The chapter "Re-entombed," to which the author draws special attention in the Preface, indicates channels hitherto untouched for industrious research. Mr. Parker Woodward has opened new

ground in drawing attention to the series of curious circumstances which are found between the years 1702 and 1740, culminating in the erection of the monument to William Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey in 1740. If space permitted much might be said in amplification of the original and remarkable theories set out in this chapter. It should be read and re-read, and the many clues suggested followed up by Baconians.

Mr. Parker Woodward's style of writing is so clear that the reader may without difficulty find his way through "the Maze." His book is of special value at the present moment. It affords a complete refutation of Mr. J. M. Robertson's indictment that Baconians are ignorant of the literature contemporary with that of Shakespeare. It is a monument of patient research. It exhibits a knowledge of historical and literary facts ten times greater than that which is displayed in "The Baconian Heresy."

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Baconian Heresy.

TO THE EDITOR OF "BACONIANA."

SIR,—Mr. Robertson, M.P., has joined in the attempt to stay the Baconian tide. With Crawford's "Collectanea" as map, he pushes it at certain writers who have urged more or less tentatively that Bacon wrote the Shakespeare plays and sonnets.

It is very natural that in feeling the way to this conclusion, mistakes have been made, and some arguments carried too far. Yet notwithstanding the points made against Lords Campbell and Penzance, Judges Webb and Holmes, and other lawyers such as Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Rushton, Mr. Castle, K.C., and Mr. Bumpas, their general conclusion that the writer of the plays was a skilled lawyer remains common sense. Take away Peele, Marlowe, Greene, Spenser, Lyly and Nashe, as being other vizards used by Bacon, Mr. Robertson would have a platform left, though not a very big one. In his present state of mind I will not withdraw Kyd or Puttenham or anything of Jonson. But Heywood must have been a law student, or why was he at Gray's Inn?

On the classical question I should have preferred to see Mr. Robertson come to close grips with Professor Churton Collins and Mr. Edwin Reed's arguments and instances, rather than those of Lord Penzance and Mr. Donnelly.

Mr. Robertson expresses his scorn at cyphers, and passing by the "Manes Verulamiani" affirms that any belief as to a more extended authorship than that of the works under Bacon's name is monomania.

As he rather suggests that I have this trouble in a somewhat aggravated form I would, just by way of returning the compliment,

point out that Mr. Robertson may have the disease without being aware of it. He states that he has "lived as much in the spiritual society of both Shakespeare and Bacon as the majority of men of letters." Yes, there is the trouble. The notion of two individual authors has branded it.

Bacon intended that many people, particularly those of some generations afterwards, should do so. But, if I understand his "Cogitata et Visa" aright, he contemplated a time when folks would find the key of interpretation.

Mr. Robertson is a fine critic, but hopeless as an investigator. His own case, and what he thinks was the actors', have too much in common. Shakespeare helped his father. So did Mr. Robertson. Shakespeare may have been a law clerk. Mr. Robertson was. Both left school very early. Both, Mr. Robertson assures us, acquired culture in their spare time—the one sufficient for *Venus and Adonis*, the other sufficient to accuse of monomania those he differs from.

No, Mr. Robertson, M.P.; this business is rapidly being cleared without you.

When finally cleared, you will think more of Dogberry's words and less of the Stratfordian "library" sketched so imaginatively on page 544 of your "Confutation."

14th March, 1913. PARKER WOODWARD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "BACONIANA."

SIR,—I am a new-comer in the Baconian Society, and anxious to contribute my mite of information. What I have to impart may be old, but it is, perhaps, interesting, and may induce someone to take up the collection of old books on the lines I have followed.

I shall be most grateful for any information and assistance, and pleased to render either. I am making a collection of all books containing a colon or other stops in the headings. It is a big task, for up to the present I have over sixty. I have mentioned these marks to many expert booksellers and collectors, not one of whom had noticed them before. Printers have told me that they certainly mean something, and were not put in merely to fill up space. Of course it is possible that printers may have used them for some purpose of their own, but having studied them a good deal, I think they have some deeper meaning. They always seem to lead me back to Bacon and his Rosicrucian Society; but I will not attempt any theories until I have given an opportunity to your readers to show me that I have found a mare's nest. The books date from 1606 to 1780, and they come from many countries, and are in many languages. From studying some of the queer volumes which I have picked up, I have come to the conclusion that in the numerical cypher A is not 25 but 27. The "Resuscitatio" of 1671 contains at the end of Rawley's Life, a few lines of print with paper carefully pasted over. This is the same in the four copies I have knowledge of—Mr. Frank Woodward's,

my own, and two in the United States. This hidden printing is worthy of much study. At present I take it to inform us that A is 27. Now in any numerical cypher used by the inventor of the biliteral, it is quite certain that two numerals will always be used to indicate each letter, for otherwise it is necessary to punctuate the cypher, which renders it nearly useless. Therefore the numbers 1 to 9 will not be used, and K becomes the first letter. Is this the explanation of the Kay cypher? Working on these lines we can make a table, using the numbers 10 to 99. After Z comes &, and then E, followed by A, B, etc. That this is so is clearly proved by a reference to "A Repertorie of Records" by Thomas Powell, 1631, page 33. In such a cypher Bacon is 111 (three pillars!). Francis Bacon is 282. In "Gustavus Selenus," pages 111 and 282 are paginated in different type to the rest of the book. 259 means Shakespeare, as also 255, 249, according to the number of E's given the value of 26 or 31. Page 259 in "Baconiana," or "Bacon's Remains," reads, "259, That is Francis Bacon, Baron of Verulam, Viscount of St. Albans." On page 254 of "Selenus" is the chapter referred to by Sir Edwin Durning Lawrence as elucidating *Love's Labour Lost.* I could give many other extraordinary facts which seem to show that my cypher is correct, but I think the reading of Bacon as 111 is sufficient to convince those who think it over. To conclude, I will give you a little curiosity which shows how, by merely omitting the tail of one letter Q, the words ROSE, CROSS may be formed out of BACON as a key word. But before doing so, I would like to make two statements which will, I expect, convince your readers that I am rather a wild speculator. I have not made them, however, without some grounds. I firmly believe that Bacon's manuscripts are in the Tower of London, and I cannot believe that Bacon died in 1626, or until after 1631. Later I will, if you permit me, set before your readers a few reasons for these beliefs; but with regard to the Tower, surely it is the only place that a man of Bacon's intelligence could possibly choose. Here is the curiosity referred to above :—

B c d e f g h i k l m n o p q R S t u w x y z a
A b c d e f g h i k l m n o p Q r S t u w x y z
C d e f g h i k l m n o p q R S t u w x y z a b
O p q r s t u w x y z a b C d E f g h i k l m n
N o p q r s t u w x y z a b C d e f g h i k l m

Can any other words be made from this table? I do not think so. Some of the Rosicrucian marks are very like a Q, though such a simple explanation would shock Mr. Jennings.

I had not the advantage of reading Mrs. Pott's admirable works until quite recently, but had arrived at somewhat similar conclusions as to the Rosicrucians. The activity of Anthony Bacon in their literary Society is fairly obvious from the two dedications to him by Sylvester in the "Divine Weeks" (1608), which I do not recollect having seen any mention of.

Yours truly, WILLIAM E. CLIFTON.

St. Peter's Chambers, Nottingham.